

# Jesus Authority & Parable of the Two Sons

*Matthew 21:23-32*

The events in this account from Matthew 21 take place on the Monday of Holy Week. The setting is important to note, especially since the text includes the first in a series of challenges by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to Jesus' authority.

One day earlier Jesus had entered the city amid great celebration. He had cleansed the temple and then healed the blind and lame in the temple courts while children proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Already at this point, the chief priests and the scribes were indignant with Jesus and with the whole scene in the temple.

The next day, after Jesus had cursed the fig tree, He returned to the temple courts to teach the people. Again the chief priests – this time with the people's elders – came up to Jesus and interrupted His teaching.

**Read Matthew 21:23-27.**

*What question did the chief priests and elders ask Jesus? Why did they ask this question?*

*What was the intention of the question?*

*What did Jesus do?*

*Why did Jesus bring up the ministry of John the Baptist as an example?*

*How did the chief priests and elders respond to Jesus' question?*

Jesus' question really is a call to repentance, an 11<sup>th</sup> hour invitation to believe in Him as Savior. This final call to repentance and faith is at the heart of the parable Jesus now tells.

**Read Matthew 21:28-32.**

Matthew is the only one to record this parable for us. The parable of the two sons is, in part, about the Word of God and how people respond to it.

*What is the response of the first son? What is the response of the second son?*

*"Which of these two sons did the will of his father?"*

It is significant that the Greek word for "repent" literally means "to change your mind". Just as significant is the Greek word for "sir" can also be translated as "Lord". We are reminded of Jesus words in His Sermon on the Mount: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

*Jesus question can be posed to each of us as well. How might you answer the question, "Which son are you?"*

Often, we are convinced of our own righteousness, like the chief priests and elders, thinking we don't need to repent of anything. Sometimes we ignore our Father's command and don't do His will. Lastly, there are times when we don't accept Jesus' authority over our lives. We hear what He says, but we don't change our minds, our behaviors, or our hearts. Instead, we make our final authority in all things me, myself, and I.

But John's message is still valid: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). As the Son of God, Jesus had divine authority over all creation and over all powers on earth; nevertheless, within days He would submit to the authorities that sought to kill Him. Yet ultimately His divine authority would be revealed in His glorious resurrection from the dead. Jesus's victory over sin and death throws open the doors of the kingdom of God to believers repenting of even the greatest sins.

In God's kingdom, no repentant sinner is every turned away. Repentant tax collectors and prostitutes were welcomed; so are we!